

EXHIBIT 9
DATE 2/3/09
HB 382

Members of the FW&P Committee

Re: HB 382

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, I am writing you in opposition to HB 382.

My name is Bill Tiddy and I have been a Bowhunting Instructor for 10+years, plus I have participated in at least 4 NFAA Instructor programs and I am a Certified NFAA instructor.

Historically, the generation of this concept started when Tom Baumiester went hunting, before the last Legislative Session. He and his son went Turkey hunting in the Eastern part of the State. Tom harvested his gobbler and then shortly after that another bird appeared and walked nearby. His son could not shoot because he was not 12yrs. old. But he did have the experience of the hunt.

Since then Tom has been pushing for younger persons to hunt and harvest. The US Sportsmen Alliance has a sub organization (~~Hunters~~ ^{Hunters} Affiliates) that has been encouraging States to lower the hunting(harvesting) age. The reason is to expose more children to the hunting experience. The fact of the matter is that a child may go hunting with a parent without a firearm and have a great hunting experience. None of us who hunt have ever returned home all the time with a successful harvest, but we had a great hunt.

This bill calls these children "apprentice" hunters. They are not, they are beginning hunters, if hunters at all.

It wants to issue hunting privileges to children regardless of age. There is no definition of what hunt means, Big game, upland birds or waterfowl.

It would negate the need for a child to take hunter education courses even down to the age of 6yrs. I'm sorry, I do not want to be around any child carrying a firearm or bow without them first having passed the hunter education course. Have any of you taken the time to go to any of our school recesses and watched 6-12yr students interact? How many of them would you take hunting, with them having a firearm? The law is 12years and has been since before the 40's and there is nothing wrong with it.

Then if I am with an under age child I could be within voice contact and vision with a radio and binoculars.

The program being promoted is from other States who have a different way of hunting. In Montana most of the hunting is spot and stalk or still hunting(which is not still). Very little is from fixed ground blinds. Our terrain is different than other States, more open and rugged.

Then there will be the comment that other States are doing it and it seems to be working. That, in my mind, is OK for them but not for Montana. We have different terrain and conditions for hunters to enjoy the Hunting Experience.

Thank You, Bill Tiddy; 3355 Pinecrest Drive; Helena: 475-3569